

CONCEPT 7: THE CIVIL WAR IN THE DELTA

GOAL

The goal of this concept is to illustrate that the “Lower Mississippi River Valley was the most critical theater of the Civil War.” As presented in the recently published brochure *The Thousand Mile Front: Civil War in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, many significant battles and skirmishes occurred across the region. From Shiloh, Tennessee, to Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Pea Ridge, Arkansas, to New Orleans, Louisiana, the courageous sons and daughters of the North and South gave their lives in the war that split the nation. The region offers a variety of resources that recall the strategies that were planned, the men, women, and children whose lives were forever changed and the battles that occurred during the nation’s conflict with itself.

IMPORTANCE/SIGNIFICANCE²

The election of Abraham Lincoln as president in 1860 changed the lives of all Americans almost overnight and the nation itself forever. Lincoln’s belief that “a house divided against itself cannot stand,” created a sense of crisis in the South and brought the issues that divided the nation into sharp focus.

The Mississippi River became the focal point in the war plans of both sides. “The Father of Waters” had moved lumber, wheat, corn, and meat from the Midwest, cotton and tobacco from the Upper South to New Orleans, and European goods upriver. Control of the Mississippi and the rivers that flow into it

would allow the North to move troops and supplies into the South while crippling the South’s ability to survive. The South needed to protect itself, especially the rich farmland of the Mississippi River Valley, from Northern invasion. The Mississippi, carrier of commerce, became the bearer of dreams as a divided nation struggled with itself over its future.

The Civil War changed not only the South but the nation. War ravaged the South, destroying railroads, factories, and homes. The end of the Civil War brought an uneasy peace, but was followed by one of the most traumatic periods in American history — Reconstruction. During that period, the Lower Mississippi Valley would also play an important role.

RESOURCES

This concept, based on the map of “Thousand Mile Front” focuses on those resources related to battles and/or skirmishes that occurred during the Civil War in the Lower Mississippi Delta. Today visitors can learn about the Civil War at National Park Service sites, including Shiloh National Military Park, Shiloh, Tennessee, Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, Mississippi; state park units like Fort Pillow State Historic Area, Fulton, Tennessee, or Columbus-Belmont Battlefield State Park, Columbus, Kentucky. Many small local museums also contain Civil War memorabilia and local histories. Roadside plaques and monuments commemorate events and military leaders from the Delta.

² Material is taken from *The Thousand Mile Front* brochure, which reflects a collective effort of Civil War historians, universities, preservationists, tourism officials, and private nonprofit partners. Because this effort was underway at the same time, the heritage study did not undertake additional research on the Civil War for this document.

RESOURCES

BATTLES AND SKIRMISHES — These sites represent the places where significant battles ensued between Union and Confederate troops during the Civil War. There are many more sites where troops were garrisoned, local residents fortified their towns against the threat of war, and where plans were hatched to foil the enemy. This concept draws on the work of the Civil War Heritage Task Force that produced the brochure: *The Thousand Mile Front: Civil War in the Lower Mississippi Valley*.

Missouri

1. Westport
2. Deerfield
3. Carthage
4. Neosho
5. Republic
6. Springfield
7. Ozark
8. Hartsville
9. Pilot Knob
10. Cape Girardeau
11. Charleston
12. Belmont
13. New Madrid

Kentucky

14. Sacramento

Arkansas

15. Pea Ridge
16. Fayetteville
17. Prairie Grove
18. St. Francis
19. Prescott
20. Chidester
21. New Edinburg

22. St. Charles
23. Gillett
24. Lake Village

Tennessee

25. Tiptonville
26. Union City
27. Kenton
28. Rutherford
29. Dyer
30. Trenton
31. Humbolt
32. Denmark
33. Fulton
34. McKenzie
35. Parkers Crossroads
36. Lexington
37. Chesterfield
38. Clifton
39. Shiloh
40. Pocahontas

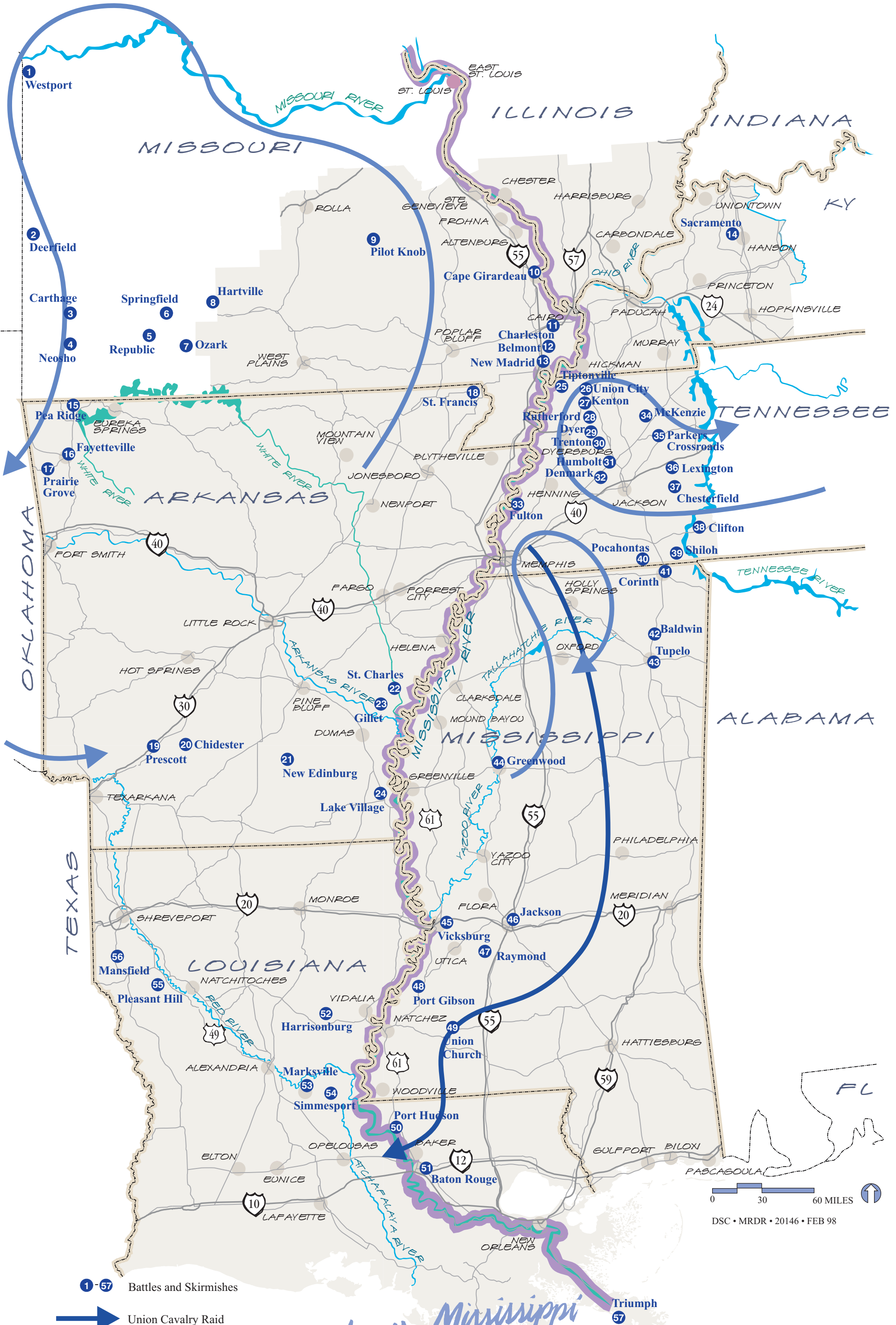
Mississippi

41. Corinth
42. Baldwin
43. Tupelo

44. Greenwood
45. Vicksburg
46. Jackson
47. Raymond
48. Port Gibson
49. Union Church

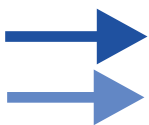
Louisiana

50. Port Hudson
51. Baton Rouge
52. Harrisonburg
53. Marks ville
54. Simmesport
55. Pleasant Hill
56. Mansfield
57. Triumph



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1-57 Battles and Skirmishes



Union Cavalry Raid

Confederate Cavalry Raids

NOTE: Information from "Thousand-Mile Front:
Civil War in the Lower Mississippi Valley"

Lower Mississippi
Delta Region

HERITAGE STUDY

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